



November 18, 2008

Dear Ms. Valerie Jarrett, Mr. John Podesta, and Mr. Peter Rouse,

As Chairman of the National Head Start Association (NHSA) Board of Directors, I am writing to you to request, on behalf of NHSA, official representation of the Head Start program on the early childhood transition planning team.

Head Start is one of our nation's primary providers of developmental and educational services to underprivileged children and families for nearly half a century. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs serve more than 1 million children across the United States, in U.S. territories, and on American Indian reservations. In fact, no other single early childhood funding stream reaches as many children and families in as many communities as the Head Start program.

Moreover, no other early childhood program seeks out the most vulnerable children and families in America with the level of passion and dedication as the Head Start program. I believe we serve an invaluable role in times when families must decide whether they will use the last of their paycheck to make a house payment, buy a tank of gas, or put food on the table. In difficult times, Head Start programs provide educational, health, economic, and law enforcement benefits to children and families. I also believe, as a national laboratory of best practices in early education, that Head Start will serve a key role in ensuring more children than ever have access to a high quality early childhood experience.

I encourage you to reach out to the NHSA Board of Directors to help identify appropriate Head Start representation for the transition team. As a nationally elected body, the NHSA Board of Directors is representative of every Head Start program in the nation, including rural, urban, and migrant worker programs. I would be more than happy to assist you in identifying the appropriate individuals to aid your transition in 2009.

Sincerely,

Ron Herndon
Chairman
National Head Start Association Board of Directors

cc: Barbara Bowman
Carol Browner
Congressman Rahm Emanuel
Christopher Edley, Jr.
Donald Gips
Mark Gitenstein
Edward Kaufman
The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Federico Pena